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UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director
Assistance to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
Support for a comprehensive population programme

Proposed UNFPA assistance:	$3.5 million, of which $2.5 million would be programmed from UNFPA regular resources. UNFPA would seek to provide the balance of $1 million from a combination of UNFPA regular resources and other resources, including multi-bilateral resources, when and to the extent such additional resources become available.
Estimated value of the Government's contribution:	To be determined
Duration:	Four years
Estimated starting date:	January 1993
Executing agencies:	Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic United Nations and United Nations agencies and organizations National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Government co-ordinating agency:	Ministry of Economy, Planning and Finance

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Lao People's Democratic Republic

Demographic facts

Population (000)	
Total	4,202
Males	2,062
Females	2,140
Sex ratio (/100 females)	96.3
Urban	782
Rural	3,420
Per cent urban	18.6
Population in year 2000 (000)	5,592
Functional age groups (%)	
Young child: 0-4	17.8
Child: 5-14	25.8
Youth: 15-24	18.6
Elderly: 60+	4.9
65+	3.0
Percentage of women aged 15-49	45.8
Median age (years)	18.2
Dependency ratios: total	87.2
(/100) Aged 0-14	81.7
Aged 65+	5.5
Agricultural population density (/hectare of arable land)	3.3
Population density (/sq. km.)	17.0

Average annual change (000)	
Population increase	136
Births	205
Deaths	69
Net migration	..
Annual population total (% growth)	3.00
Urban	6.08
Rural	2.22
Crude birth rate (/1000)	45.2
Crude death rate (/1000)	15.2
Net migration rate (/1000)	..
Total fertility rate (/woman)	6.69
Contraceptive prevalence rate (% 15-44)	..
Gross reproduction rate (/woman)	3.26
Net reproduction rate (/woman)	2.43
Infant mortality rate (/1000)	97
Maternal mortality rate (/100,000)	350
Life expectancy at birth (years)	
Males	49.5
Females	52.5
Both sexes	51.0
GNP per capita (U.S. dollars, 1991)	200

Sources: Population density on arable land is derived from two publications issued by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: FAO Production Yearbook 1985 and World-wide Estimates and Projections of Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Population Segments 1950-2025, ESS/MIS/86/2; gross national product per capita: World Bank, World Development Report 1992. Figures for population, total population by sex, population by age group, age indicators, urban-rural population, and population density (/sq. km.) refer to the year 1990; figures for average annual change, rate of annual change, and fertility and mortality are the five-year averages for 1990-1995. These data are from the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Development of the United Nations, World Population Prospects: 1992. Figures for maternal mortality are for 1980-1990; figures for contraceptive prevalence rates are for currently married women aged 15-44. Both are from table 5 of World's Women: Trends and Statistics, 1970-1990, New York, United Nations, 1991 (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.K.8). Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available.

I. SUMMARY

1. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) proposes to support a comprehensive population programme in the amount of $3.5 million, of which $2.5 million would be programmed from UNFPA's regular resources, over a four-year period, starting January 1993, to assist the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in achieving its population and development objectives. UNFPA would seek to provide the balance of $1 million from a combination of UNFPA regular resources and other resources, including multi-bilateral resources, when and to the extent such additional resources become available. The programme is designed to cover a four-year period in order to synchronize the UNFPA programme with those of UNDP and the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF), both of which cover the period 1992-1996.

2. The proposed programme is based on: (a) the Government's policies and strategies, particularly those concerning maternal and child health (MCH) and birth spacing; (b) the findings and recommendations of the Programme Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) mission undertaken in December 1991; (c) the outcome of meetings and consultations with senior officials and representatives of government departments; and (d) consultations with representatives of agencies and organizations of the United Nations system as well as of NGOs and bilateral donor agencies active in the development field in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

3. The broad objective of the proposed UNFPA programme is to assist the Government in improving the quality of life of the people and in enhancing the role, status and well-being of women. More specifically, the programme would assist the Government in achieving its expressed goal of reducing infant and maternal mortality rates by 25 per cent by the year 2000, primarily by promoting Safe Motherhood through the extension of MCH/birth-spacing services, and in developing the national capacity to integrate population factors into development planning.

4. All projects under this proposed programme, as in all UNFPA-assisted programmes, would be undertaken in accordance with the principles and objectives of the World Population Plan of Action; that is, that population policies should be consistent with internationally and nationally recognized human rights of individual freedom, justice and the survival of national, regional and minority groups (para. 14(d)); that respect for human life is basic to all human societies (para. 14 (e)); and that all couples have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so (para. 14(f)).

II. BACKGROUND

5. Demographic trends. The population of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is estimated to be 4.2 million and growing at an annual rate of 3.0 per cent. If the present rate of growth were maintained, the population would double in less than 25 years. Both fertility and mortality are high compared to other countries in Southeast Asia: the total fertility rate is estimated by the United Nations at 6.7 children per woman and life expectancy is less than 50 years. The population, made up of various ethnic groups, is unevenly distributed throughout the national territory, with less than 20 per cent living in urban areas. The major demographic changes occurring over the past two decades have been in internal and international migration. Massive emigration took place during the early years of the period 1975-1985, and more than 300,000 Laotian refugees were registered in Thailand during the decade. In addition, a substantial proportion of the population was displaced during the course of the war in Viet Nam, especially in the northeastern provinces.

6. Estimates of infant mortality vary widely. For example, the United Nations' 1992 revised estimate is 97 per 1,000 live births. The 1992 analysis of the UNFPA-supported multi-round survey initiated in 1988, however, puts the figure much higher, at 130 per 1,000 live births. According to a recent survey conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), the national maternal mortality rate is estimated at 650 per 100,000 live births, a figure that is considerably higher than previous estimates. The rate in the mountainous northeastern part of the country is more than twice the national rate, reaching 1,400 per 100,000 live births, one of the highest in the world. Nationally, a maternal mortality rate of 650 per 100,000 means that a woman has a 1 in 150 risk of dying every time she gives birth. Since, on average, women in Laos have 6.7 births, the risk of dying in childbirth occurs 6.7 times during a woman's reproductive years. The risk of a woman dying in childbirth during her lifetime is thus approximately 1 in 20.

7. There are no national data on contraceptive prevalence rates (CPR), although it is estimated that less than 10 per cent of married women of reproductive age use modern contraceptives. The majority of people living in rural areas do not have access to basic health, birth-spacing and nutrition services. Moreover, the health care system, which lacks trained personnel and basic equipment and supplies, is oriented towards curative rather than preventive measures and has a very low capacity to deliver services, particularly outside provincial capitals. Such shortcomings are compounded by the fact that the Lao People's Democratic Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an estimated per capita gross national product (GNP) of $200 in 1991. Infrastructure is poor and access to rural areas is difficult.

8. Population policy. The Government's policy towards population issues was pro-natalist until the mid-1980s. Beginning in 1988, however, the Government endorsed birth spacing as a measure to improve maternal and child health and subsequently legalized the sale and distribution of contraceptives. In 1990, the Ministry of Public Health began working with UNFPA to provide birth-spacing services in the MCH units in two main hospitals in Vientiane and in one or two MCH units in the provinces, both to help improve maternal and child health and to discourage illegal abortions. The current Five-Year Development Plan (1991-1995), promulgated by the Fifth Party Congress in March 1991, recognizes the need for demographic growth to be in harmony with economic development in order to improve people's well-being, and the need for comprehensive public-health services, including MCH/birth-spacing services. The fifth plan document further recognizes that large families can have a negative impact on the health of women and children and impair women's contribution to economic development.

III. REVIEW OF UNFPA AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO DATE

9. Since the late 1970s, UNFPA has provided assistance to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on a project-by-project basis, primarily to help develop the country's capacity to collect and process demographic data. In recent years, the Fund has supported two major data collection efforts: the 1985 census and the 1988-1992 Multi-Round Vital Statistics Survey. UNFPA has also provided assistance to help improve the delivery of MCH/birth-spacing services and has worked with the Government in the areas of population and development policies and awareness creation among policy-makers on population issues. As part of this collaboration, UNFPA has fielded a number of missions to the Lao People's Democratic Republic to assist in developing a national population programme as well as a more comprehensive strategy for population assistance. Missions have also been undertaken to provide technical backstopping for various projects.

10. In the area of data collection, the first national census of 1985 has provided a basic source of information on the size, structure and distribution of the population as well as on ethnicity, education and the

level of labour force participation. This exercise, though valuable, was troubled by a number of procedural and technical problems. The preliminary results have not been followed by a final tabulation nor have final figures on the characteristics of the population been officially released.

11. The UNFPA-funded multi-round survey helped strengthen the country's demographic research capability as well as develop a national system of vital statistics and civil registration. The first round of the survey was conducted in July 1988, and subsequent rounds took place every six months thereafter. In addition, a 1990 inter-censal national population count was built into the ongoing multi-round survey. However, difficulties were encountered with the data processing of the surveys, and the results proved to be of uncertain reliability.

12. Although the statistical infrastructure remains weak, the situation has improved considerably since the early 1980s. With UNFPA assistance, the staff of the State Statistical Centre (SSC) received training in sampling and mapping techniques and in various statistical methods, as well as practical experience in data collection and processing. Two key staff members went abroad for training.

13. In the MCH/family planning sector, UNFPA has provided assistance through a service delivery project. The project, executed by WHO, was approved in 1989 but owing to numerous delays did not start activities until 1991. Through this project, MCH/birth-spacing services are being provided in clinics in two hospitals in Vientiane. These services are rather limited in scope, however, due to the fact that each clinic operates only one day per week. Moreover, the project is short of supplies and is experiencing a number of operational difficulties. In addition, little demand has been generated for these services as word of mouth has been the only source of information on the existence of the clinics. To date, there have been no programme or public information activities designed to raise awareness among the population on the health benefits of MCH/birth-spacing services nor any information activities to inform the public that these services are available.

Other external assistance

14. United Nations agencies and organizations have an extensive presence in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. UNDP and UNICEF both started new country programme cycles in 1992. UNDP's $36.6-million fourth country programme, which ended in 1991, included assistance to some primary health-care activities and to selected AIDS prevention and MCH activities. The 1992-1996 UNICEF programme will include some support to facilitate the preparation of a health policy covering MCH/birth-spacing services, immunization, nutrition, basic education, rural water supply and control of transmissible diseases. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been involved in activities related to the repatriation of refugees from Thailand, allocating $2 million for this purpose during 1989-1991.

15. Most bilateral assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic is provided for infrastructure-building and other general developmental activities, with very little earmarked for population-related activities. Until recently, Eastern European countries provided the bulk of this bilateral support. At present, the largest bilateral donors are Sweden and Japan, each providing approximately $20 million a year, followed by Australia and France, whose assistance programmes are now fairly substantial and growing. Only Sweden, however, is providing direct assistance to population activities, assisting the State Statistical Centre in efforts to strengthen its data collection capabilities.

16. A background document prepared for the UNDP-organized 1992 Round Table Meetings of economic assistance among multilateral agencies and bilateral donors indicates that in 1990 there were 25 NGOs active

in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, providing technical assistance totalling $1.2 million and capital assistance totalling $2.5 million in various areas of development. Support to population activities, per se, is very limited, however, with only a few NGOs involved in MCH-related activities. These include, among others, Save the Children, Japan International Volunteer Centre, the Mennonite Central Committee, and Family Planning International Assistance.

IV. PROPOSED PROGRAMME 1993-1996

17. The proposed programme of UNFPA assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic is designed to complement and supplement the Government's development policies and plans. It thus follows the policy directions enunciated by the Fifth Party Congress concerning the need to regulate demographic growth so as to promote economic development and to improve the well-being of women and children, and to develop comprehensive public health services, including birth spacing.

18. The objectives of the proposed programme are outlined in paragraph 3. The programme would seek to strengthen the country's capacity to collect and analyse demographic data, since accurate data and a solid understanding of the linkages between population and development are indispensable for the design of effective health and development policies and programmes. It would also assist the Government in its efforts to transform a largely inoperative MCH system into an effective provider of MCH/birth-spacing services and information.

19. To achieve these broad objectives, the proposed programme would: (a) assist the Government in building the national capacity to formulate a population policy, to collect and analyse pertinent data, and to plan population activities; (b) promote Safe Motherhood by increasing the availability of and access to modern contraceptives and other MCH/birth-spacing services; and (c) develop and undertake information, education and communication (IEC) activities in support of MCH/birth-spacing activities. The programme would also help raise awareness among policy-makers and the general public of the linkages between population and development and of the health benefits of MCH/birth-spacing activities; promote the participation of women in population and development activities; and collect needed information on the role and health conditions of Laotian women.

Maternal and child health and family planning

20. The PRSD mission found that the health care system in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is functioning at a very low level and that MCH services, in particular, are barely operational. It also found that there is an unmet demand for birth-spacing services, as evidenced by the high incidence of complications following induced abortions and the frequent requests for sterilizations at hospitals. Such information is confirmed by organizations active in the health field.

21. MCH services are limited by the same constraints that affect general health care in the country, including the lack of trained personnel; poor and dilapidated facilities and infrastructure; inadequate budget allocations earmarked for the health-care system; shortages of medical supplies and drugs; and an emphasis on curative rather than preventive health care. The capacity to deliver health-care services is further hampered by the inaccessibility of rural areas and a lack of coordination among various services as well as between provincial and district health authorities.

22. Family planning/birth-spacing services, per se, are generally not available in the Lao People's Democratic Republic with the exception of very limited services being provided in two UNFPA-supported MCH units in Vientiane and in one or two NGO-assisted provincial health centres. However, even the few services that currently exist are operating at a very low level and offer only a limited range of contraceptives. Contraceptives are available through commercial outlets to those who can afford them, particularly in the capital. Data on contraceptive prevalence and knowledge do not exist, with the exception of one very limited knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) survey undertaken in a relatively prosperous section of Vientiane, where three-quarters of those interviewed did not know of a single method of contraception. Anecdotal evidence and the high level of fertility suggest that contraceptive prevalence is likely to be well below 10 per cent. There have likewise been no qualitative studies on issues relating to reproductive health and birth-spacing practices.

23. The overall objective of UNFPA activities in this sector is to assist the Government in strengthening the country's moribund maternal and child health-care system so that it can effectively deliver MCH/birth-spacing services to women of reproductive age. The specific objectives would be to improve the quality and accessibility of MCH/birth-spacing services and to increase the availability of safe, reliable modern contraceptives. Targets will be set once the necessary information on fertility and birth-spacing practices has been made available through a KAP survey that would be supported by UNFPA as part of this programme cycle.

24. The proposed programme activities would include the training of MCH health and field personnel, the supply and distribution of needed equipment and contraceptive supplies, and the implementation of a system to collect and record service data for use in programme management. These activities would be implemented in two stages, each lasting approximately two years. The first stage would focus on training staff and upgrading equipment within the existing MCH facilities in Vientiane municipality and five major provinces (Vientiane province, Louang Prabang, Savannakhet, Champassack and Khammonane). The second phase would provide inputs to initiate birth-spacing services in another six provinces, which would be determined after data are obtained from the KAP survey being planned as part of this programme (see the section on data collection and analysis).

25. The training activities would include the training of doctors and midwives in the provision of birth-spacing services and in counselling on contraceptive methods and birth spacing. UNFPA would also support management training in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of relevant activities as well as in the supervision of staff. The training would be provided through various means: (a) direct training in-country of new and existing service providers; (b) incorporation of MCH/birth-spacing training curricula in schools of medicine and nursing; and (c) the provision of fellowships for study abroad, especially through the technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) modality, for priority personnel who would then serve as trainers of trainers. The development of appropriate curricula and IEC materials would be a requisite preliminary training activity.

26. In order to make the most effective use of the existing health-care network to provide MCH/birth-spacing services, it will be necessary to ensure the adequate and timely supply of contraceptives, essential drugs and equipment at selected service delivery points. This will require upgrading the warehouses at central and provincial levels, improving their transportation and distribution networks and training appropriate staff in the storage, distribution, and management of contraceptive supplies.

27. To help monitor and manage the implementation of MCH/birth-spacing policies and programmes at provincial and district levels, UNFPA would support the development of a simple but effective system for recording and reporting. In addition, UNFPA would provide assistance to carry out small-scale qualitative studies on reproductive health and birth-spacing practices and attitudes, which will be used to develop and refine service delivery and IEC activities.

28. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of $1.8 million for this sector, of which $300,000 would be sought from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources.

Information, education and communication

29. The PRSD mission found that little or no attention had been given to IEC activities in the past. There have been no public information programmes designed to increase awareness on population issues, no IEC activities to support and create demand for the very limited birth-spacing services available, and practically no appropriate IEC materials available at any level. This absence of IEC activities is particularly notable in view of the recent shifts in government policy with regard to population issues and birth-spacing activities. There is a need, therefore, to spell out and make known the Government's policies and strategies in these areas as well as the goals and objectives of these activities. There is also a need to make use of appropriate IEC activities to support the execution of these policies.

30. The objective of UNFPA assistance in this sector would be to focus on creating awareness of population issues among policy-makers, planners, and the society at large as well as developing information and motivational messages in support of MCH/birth-spacing services. As these are new areas for UNFPA support in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, UNFPA would assist the Government in developing a national IEC strategy that would not only delineate the roles and functions of all participating agencies and organizations but also help to coordinate their efforts.

31. For this purpose, UNFPA would help organize a mission to develop the strategy and specify the scope of activities. The Centre for Health Education and Information (CHEI) and the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and other appropriate agencies will be utilized for this purpose. Data from the proposed KAP survey on birth spacing would be used to develop the IEC strategy and corresponding activities.

32. The IEC activities would target both men and women, focus on birth spacing and Safe Motherhood, include motivation and counselling components, and rely primarily on face-to-face interpersonal communication as this is likely to be the most credible and effective source of information in rural areas. In view of the country's near 50 per cent illiteracy rate, it will be necessary to develop visual IEC materials in addition to the written ones and to provide training in one-on-one counselling. The CHEI, LWU and pertinent NGOs will work together to develop and produce materials in the Lao language and other local languages. Because of the relatively limited coverage of the various media in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the strategy would incorporate only a small mass media and video component.

33. As recommended by the PRSD mission, UNFPA would provide assistance to introduce population education in the curricula of primary and secondary schools nationwide, as well as in the non-formal education sector. The aim would be to develop a basic understanding among youth of key population concepts and of the interrelationships between population and development. The curricula would include components on family life education, AIDS prevention, and population, resources and the environment. UNFPA would also

support the training of teachers in the fundamentals of population and development and in curriculum development.

34. UNFPA would provide a total of $500,000 for this sector, of which $200,000 would be sought from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources.

Data collection and analysis

35. The PRSD mission identified the lack of accurate and up-to-date demographic data as a serious shortcoming in population and development planning in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. It also noted the country's generally poor research capability for carrying out quantitative surveys and the need to upgrade the national capacity to collect and analyse demographic data, particularly in such areas as mapping, household listing, questionnaire design, data-entry/editing, tabulation and analysis.

36. There are no representative data available on the knowledge of and attitudes towards family size, or about the practice of birth spacing in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Such data are essential for understanding fertility patterns, for determining the demand for services, and for designing programme strategies that focus on those who most desire services and are in greatest need. Incorporating MCH and reproductive health data into a comprehensive analysis of the country's demographic situation will further enhance their usefulness not only for MCH/birth-spacing programmes but also for monitoring national and subregional demographic trends.

37. The primary objective of UNFPA assistance in this sector would be to obtain relevant and reliable data on fertility and birth spacing for use in the MCH programme and to obtain demographic data for development planning. The strategy of the programme in this sector, as recommended by the PRSD mission, would thus be to strengthen the institutional capacity in data collection of the State Statistical Centre and other relevant institutions and to support efforts to collect much-needed data on the health conditions of the population and on knowledge of, attitudes towards and practice of birth spacing.

38. In order to obtain the data needed to formulate appropriate activities for MCH/birth-spacing, IEC and women, population and development, and IEC activities, UNFPA would help organize and provide support for the conduct of a survey on birth spacing, fertility and reproductive health. UNFPA has requested financial support for this survey through a multi-bilateral arrangement with the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), which has expressed interest in supporting this activity. UNFPA would also provide technical assistance and limited support to supplement other sources of assistance provided to the Government for the conduct of the second national census, scheduled for 1995.

39. UNFPA would provide a total amount of $540,000 for this sector, of which $340,000 would be sought from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources.

Population dynamics

40. In line with the recommendations of the PRSD mission, the objective in this sector would be to strengthen the demographic training and research capacity of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. The aim would be to create a small cadre of persons with graduate and post-graduate training in MCH/family planning, public health and related social sciences.

41. The strategy would be to contribute to institution building and human resource development in order to increase the national capacity to integrate population factors fully into development planning. UNFPA would support the Government's efforts to establish a special unit or committee to help prepare a population policy and coordinate the activities of government institutions in the population sector. The unit/committee would also support policy-making in the area of population and development and contribute to the planning, development and evaluation of population programmes. UNFPA would also provide support to the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Finance and the Lao Women's Union to conduct a limited number of socio-economic and sociocultural research and reproductive health studies in collaboration with other agencies.

42. UNFPA would provide $100,000 in assistance to this sector.

Women, population and development

43. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic places emphasis on promoting the role and status of women, particularly through the participation of the Lao Women's Union (LWU). Women are encouraged to be more involved at all levels of decision-making in the various aspects of socio-economic development. However, information on the status of women and the extent of their contribution to socio-economic activities and on the cultural and belief system that influences social attitudes towards women is scarce. While the PRSD mission found that gender differentials were not extreme in most aspects of Lao society, it did note certain gender inequalities that warranted attention. These included, among others, a low level of literacy among females (35 per cent) compared to that among men (65 per cent), a low level of female school enrolment, an underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions and very high rates of maternal mortality.

44. The objective of the UNFPA programme in this sector would be to assist the Government in promoting the status of women and ensuring the active participation of women and of women's organizations in all population and development activities. The strategy would be to support research activities to provide information on the role of women in social and economic development and in society as well as on the reproductive health needs of women. The programme would also focus on increasing the participation of women and of women's organizations in the design and implementation of population and development efforts and of birth-spacing services and information activities.

45. The UNFPA programme would give special assistance to efforts to strengthen the data-collection capabilities of the LWU such that it can undertake sample surveys and selected socio-cultural studies. In particular, selected LWU staff would be trained in techniques of data collection and analysis, so that it can conduct, in collaboration with the SSC, a survey on birth spacing, fertility and reproductive health.

46. As recommended by the PRSD mission, UNFPA would encourage the LWU to make use of its elaborate network of fieldworkers/volunteers to undertake IEC activities in support of birth spacing as an important measure in improving the health and well-being of women and children. In this regard, the Fund would provide support for the training of LWU motivators and educators at all levels in communication skills for counselling women on birth spacing and contraceptive use. The training would also include components on the dissemination and use of IEC materials and equipment.

47. UNFPA proposes assistance in the amount of $360,000 for this sector, of which $160,000 would be sought from other sources, including multi-bilateral sources.

Programme reserve

48. A reserve of $200,000 would be set aside from UNFPA's regular resources to meet unforeseen needs that may arise during the course of the proposed programme.

Programme coordination

49. The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Finance (MEPF) is currently responsible for the coordination of all external assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. As such, it will play an active role in coordinating UNFPA's assistance to the country's population activities.

50. The proposed country programme has been developed in close cooperation with the Government, other agencies of the United Nations system, NGOs, and multilateral and bilateral donors, taking into account the experience of past activities. In order to strengthen programme coordination, UNFPA would continue to coordinate its activities with those of other members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), as well as with those of other donors, through regular meetings with representatives of the organizations involved. As requested by the Government, the UNFPA field office would play an active role in coordinating population assistance from other donors (including NGOs) in order to ensure that future assistance complements and supplements that which is already being provided.

51. UNFPA would also coordinate and collaborate with other agencies and organizations such as UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank in such specific programmatic areas as the training of health personnel, the rehabilitation of health infrastructure and the supply and distribution of contraceptives and essential MCH drugs.

Programme monitoring, evaluation and management

52. Mechanisms for periodic monitoring and evaluation, including annual reviews, would be built into each programme component and conducted in accordance with standard UNFPA guidelines. A mid-term country review would be undertaken in late 1994 or early 1995. These exercises would be undertaken by UNFPA in close collaboration with the Government and with other organizations and agencies as appropriate. UNFPA will make full use of available and appropriate national and regional technical backstopping capacities, complemented by the UNFPA Country Support Team located in Bangkok.

53. The UNFPA field office will assist the Government in efforts to maximize national execution of the proposed programme. At the national level, there is limited availability of trained staff who can undertake technical tasks on monitoring, evaluation and programme management. The proposed programme, therefore, plans to provide a comprehensive training programme for both government staff and UNFPA staff to accelerate the process of national execution as well as to develop a systematic scheduling of tripartite, annual and mid-term reviews of the country programme and its various components.

Financial summary

54. As indicated in paragraph 1, UNFPA would provide assistance in the amount of $3.5 million over the four-year period 1993-1996, of which $2.5 million would be programmed from UNFPA's regular resources. UNFPA would seek to provide the balance of $1 million from a combination of UNFPA regular resources

and other resources, including multi-bilateral resources, when and to the extent such additional resources become available. The breakdown by programme area is as follows:

	UNFPA regular resources $	Other resources $	Total $
Maternal and child health and family planning	1,500,000	300,000	1,800,000
Information, education and communication	300,000	200,000	500,000
Data collection and analysis	200,000	340,000	540,000
Population dynamics	100,000	---	100,000
Women, population and development	200,000	160,000	360,000
Programme reserve	200,000	---	200,000
TOTAL	2,500,000	1,000,000	3,500,000

V. RECOMMENDATION

55. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the amount of $3.5 million for the four-year period 1993-1996;

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to commit, subject to the availability of funds, an amount of $2.5 million from UNFPA's regular resources, over the period 1993-1996;

(c) Further authorize the Executive Director to seek to provide the balance of $1 million of the approved programme from a combination of UNFPA regular resources and other resources, including multi-bilateral resources, when and to the extent such additional resources from any of the above sources become available;

(d) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate the funds and make appropriate arrangements with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and with the executing agencies.